

THAT ONE-CENT VERDICT.

The one-cent verdict returned by the jury in the Wine of Cardui case against the American Medical Association teases us to thought—as did the six-cent verdict returned some time ago in Colonel Roosevelt's celebrated suit against an editor in Michigan.

Both sides claim it as a victory. The defendant feels that, in view of the large amount demanded, a verdict of one cent is equivalent to a verdict in its favor. The plaintiff, on the other hand, concerned not only with the damages sued for but presumably with the good name and reputation of the preparation, thinks that even a one-cent verdict is a vindication.

As the jury has so far shed no particular light on the psychology responsible for the decision, we must assume that it thought the American Medical Association was wrong but not wrong enough to hurt and that the plaintiff was right but not right enough to help very much.

Incidentally, and irrespective of the merits of this particular case, it is permissible to suggest that the American Medical Association will hardly find its prestige diminished among good citizens by its opposition to the sale of proprietary medicines containing a marked percentage of alcohol.

WHEN YOU SUE AN ESTATE FOR YOUR ACCOUNT.

In considering this little suggestion in regard to the law in the State of California covering matters referred to in the above title, please do not say—"The law is all wrong; it ought to be different!" There is a great sameness about that remark, and it has nothing to do with the case, because whether you like a law or not has nothing to do with the fact that it is the law, and if you intend to live here you have to live under the control of the laws of the state.

In California the law provides that parties, or assignors of parties, to an action against an executor or administrator of the estate of a deceased person, may not testify as to any matter of fact occurring before the death of such deceased person. Now, that means just this: If your patient dies, and the executor or administrator refuses to settle your bill, and you bring suit against him for the amount of the bill, you yourself cannot testify as to the services rendered. You must have some other witness, or some other tangible evidence, in addition to your accounts. Not very long ago, in this state, exactly this situation arose and the doctor got a judgment in the trial court which was reversed and thrown out by the Supreme Court, solely because the doctor introduced no other evidence than his own and his account book. His account was apparently just, and there seemed no reason why it would not have been allowed had he complied with the law.

SOCIAL INSURANCE.

To Members of the State Medical Society:

Dr. I. M. Rubinow, the author of "Social Insurance," who has come to California to assist in the work of the Social Insurance Commission appointed by Governor Johnson, met with the latter commission and with our committee on July 8. Those present besides Dr. Rubinow were Miss Katherine Felton, Mrs. Frances Noel, Mr. George Dunlop, Dr. Flora W. Smith, Miss Barbara Nachtrieb, Drs. Sherman, Reinle, Gundrum, Tucker and Bine representing our committee; Drs. P. M. Jones and Morton Gibbons. That there is a great deal of work to be done, many statistics to be compiled, and much to be discussed, can readily be imagined. This meeting lasted for four hours, and the discussions showed us how few actual facts pertaining to California conditions are now available.

It will be necessary for us in our study of sickness and of health insurance in this state, to get at certain figures. They are not only essential to us for our study; they are essential to you—for your protection should the state eventually decide in favor of social insurance. There is no reason why the same methods should be enforced with health, as have been applied with accident insurance. With the accident compensation the lowest possible premiums are charged, so as to make the scheme attractive to employers. After deducting for administration, cash benefits to the injured, and in the case of private companies, for dividends to stockholders, the question of paying the doctor comes up. He gets what is left.

Now in health insurance, provided we can get the necessary statistics, and provided the profession is reasonable in its attitude, there is no reason why matters cannot be reversed. Let us find out how much doctors now earn, and of this, how much they actually collect. Let us know how much they really deserve, how much they need to live up to professional standards and still put aside enough for old age. Let us also know how much work they can do and do well. Then let us determine how much they should be paid under a scheme of health insurance, and then let actuaries calculate what the rates or premiums should be. If they are satisfactory to the insured, the employers, and the state, well and good; if not—well, it is too bad, but health insurance in this state will not work!

Questionnaires will soon be forwarded to every member of the State Society. It is hoped that answers will be promptly returned.

The interest in social insurance is not purely a medical one, nor a local one. The Commonwealth Club Committee meets every Friday from 4 to 6 p. m. On Saturday, July 15th, at its usual weekly luncheon, Dr. I. M. Rubinow addressed the Club in open meeting. An invitation to attend the luncheon was extended to the San Francisco County Medical Society; some sixty or more attended. We had hoped that more doctors would come. The notices were sent a bit too late; this, perhaps, explains the apparent apathy of the profession.

In Los Angeles a large group has been recently organized to study social insurance somewhat along the lines already started in San Francisco. In Los Angeles Mr. Roy V. Reppy, a very able attorney connected with the County Counsel's office, is leader of the group. It might be well if every little community had its little study group.

Dr. McCombs of New York and recently in San Francisco helping make a survey at the request of the Real Estate Board, made the statement that when a bill to establish health insurance was introduced in the New York legislature, the majority of the medical profession had never heard the term, or if they had, they did not know its meaning.

In September the San Francisco County Medical Society will devote an entire meeting to this subject. Dr. I. M. Rubinow will address us and we hope that he will not be obliged to discuss elementary matters. Dr. Lambert's report in *J. A. M. A.*, p. 1951, *et seq.*, No. 25, June 17, 1916, should be read by every member of the State Society. Further notice of the September meeting will be given in these columns.

RENÉ BINE.

WHAT WE DO NOT KNOW.

It is interesting every now and then, to stop and contrast our present knowledge of disease with views held some few years back. The etiology of aneurisms, which curiously enough have been very frequent in San Francisco, has long afforded an excellent field for speculation. A short time ago we came across a paper entitled: "The Predisposing Causes of Aneurism. A Statistical Inquiry," by John B. Hamilton, M. D., Supervising Surgeon-General of the U. S. Marine Hospital Service, Prof. of Surgery in University of Georgetown, Washington, D. C., *J. Am. Med. Sciences*, p. 386, Oct. 1885.

Hamilton starts with a very interesting historical review of the subject. He quotes the "Father of English Surgery" as believing that aneurisms were due to the impetuosity of the blood itself or to its character—too sharp, or thin, eroding the vessel or being highly fermented and bursting through. He mentions some who believe that syphilis or alcohol play an important role, and as many others, who to their own satisfaction, almost prove the contrary fact. He also quotes curious statistics as to the possible influence of nationality, occupation, complexion and social condition. He concludes that the only constant element among all the alleged causes of aneurism is that of climate; that neither syphilis nor alcoholism, nor occupation, nor heat alone, appears to have an appreciable influence on the causation of this disease. He says: "As to how far the influence of diet may extend in the production of aneurism, I have been unable to form any conclusion, but it is possible that certain kinds of foods may have a powerful influence."

He attributed the frequency of aneurisms in California in the early days to the fact that many

of the victims had come from cold northern climes to live in a mild, languid temperature. Retaining their old habits of life and living under new conditions, eating much meat, living on stimulants and excitement probably made them subject to diseases of the circulatory organs. But the climate gets most of the blame!

Compare this with the modern view that aneurisms are mainly due to syphilis, alcohol, hard work, lead poisoning, tobacco, gout, nephritis and especially the infectious diseases, and one can see how a few years produces changes of opinions.

R. B.

THE PREPAREDNESS PARADE.

This editorial comment is necessarily written before the occurrence of the much-advertised Preparedness Parade, July 22d, and in fact, as the parade is being held, this part of the JOURNAL is on the press. However, speaking from a future view of what is going on, it seems very probable that the parade will consist of very large numbers of persons, expressing emphatically their idea that this country should not close its eyes to the possibility of future trouble. And this is wise.

There are innumerable bromidic remarks to support this point of view, as for instance:

In time of peace prepare for war.

God helps the country with the heaviest guns.

Heaven helps the man who helps himself.

Pray to God, and keep your powder dry!

From these few quotations from the dim and distant past, it becomes evident that the idea of preparedness is not altogether new.

FOURTH OF JULY.

It is curiously interesting to notice how many papers comment upon the desirability of continuing a sane Fourth of July, thus eliminating a large number of deaths which formerly accompanied that joyous day, or immediately followed it, and how few of them make any note of the fact that the whole movement originated with, and was prosecuted by, the American Medical Association. Going a little further than this, it may be said with conservative justice that the idea and its prosecution originated with Dr. George H. Simmons, Editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. The people of this country have very much to be thankful to the American Medical Association for, and not the least of these things is the campaign against ruthless killing on the Fourth of July.

In 1903 there were 4449 persons injured, including 466 killed, and with 406 deaths from lockjaw. Last year there were only 1165 injuries, with only one death from lockjaw. It would seem to a calm and unprejudiced observer that the people of this country ought to be somewhat grateful for cutting off these four hundred odd deaths from lockjaw each year.